

Summary & Action Items

Governor's Renewable Energy Summit

Background: Pursuant to her Executive Order of January 5, 2010, Governor Brewer convened a plenary meeting on renewable energy on February 11, 2010. Her goal was, and is, to initiate a process by which Arizona government can advance the state's strong competitive position in renewable energy by making the best possible use of state, federal and local government resources and responsibilities. The state's role includes resource identification and characterization, land-use consideration, promotion, siting, production and transmission. A follow-up Renewable Energy Future Summit is scheduled for April 15, 2010.

Summary of Issues and Action Points: At the February meeting, and in related discussions with stakeholders, both in and out of government, numerous suggestions for process improvement were made. They include the following:

1. A Unified, Replicable Governmental Process Should be Established for Permitting Renewable Energy-Related Projects and Operations. The various government agencies dealing with renewable energy were generally established, historically, to meet needs other than renewable energy. One consequence is that the application process to meet new needs can be, understandably, ad hoc. Applicants, particularly for more complex, innovative or economically valuable projects, may enter the process without a clear, established road map. The resulting expense or delay can hold back the application of new, cleaner technologies. The ad hoc nature of the process can diminish accountability and occasion opportunities for "forum shopping." To the extent the procedures are not transparent and replicable, the capacity of all participants to create continuous process improvements is inhibited. All of these challenges—and the opportunities presented for improvement—are heightened by the involvement of various jurisdictions with independent authority. This includes state (the executive branch and the Arizona Corporation Commission), as well as local, federal, and tribal agencies.

Action Items: a. The state should explore providing prospective applicants a clear *road map* of what permits and licenses are required for specified renewable energy activities and operations. This might begin as simply a Gantt-chart listing and sequencing of prospectively applicable government agencies and requirements. This effort already is underway at the Arizona State Land Department. b. State government should explore establishing, and publicly communicating the availability of, *lead agencies* for initial state-level submittals for various types of projects and operations. c. For this purpose, and for inter-jurisdictional situations (see no. 2, below), consideration should be given to the development of computer software, similar to that used for income tax preparation, using prompts to guide users to required and relevant information. d. It is recommended that the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University be consulted for prospective involvement in these action items.

2. Project Proposals Requiring a Multi-Jurisdictional Response Present Opportunities for Additional Process Improvement. Numerous stakeholders identified opportunities for improvement in situations involving jurisdictions in addition to the state: federal, tribal, city and county.

Action Items: a. The state should explore whether state *lead agencies* could also become the points of accountability for projects including other jurisdictions. Such lead agencies might be state agencies, or those of other jurisdictions. b. The Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University can assist by convening relevant decision-makers in collective processes and using computer modeling to reach consensus on cooperative decision-making.

3. Applicants Report Encountering Redundancy in Information Requirements from Various Levels of Government: Several stakeholders reported redundancy in information requirements for permitting and licenses from various jurisdictions. It is suggested that the substantive information sought is often similar in relevant points, but the formatting may differ. The result can be unjustifiable delay and expense. The problem is said to be acute with county and local agencies.

Action Items: a. It is suggested that the state, working with the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, could convene relevant jurisdictions within Arizona to determine, jointly, how and whether recurring reporting and information requirements could be made uniform. b. The state, working with the O'Connor College of Law, could also convene federal, state and tribal agencies to the same end.

4. County and City Ordinances Can Be More Uniform With Model Statutes and Regulations. In some cases, it may be appropriate to take the next step beyond regularizing information requirements. There may be value in having uniform zoning or use requirements. If done correctly—with respect for local prerogative—this can have several beneficial effects, including: enhanced capacity of local officials to focus on essential issues; technology advancement; reduced potential for a politically favored technology or product to be conferred unfair advantage by using political decision-making to directly or indirectly curtail market competition.

Action Item: It is suggested that the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University convene relevant stakeholders to explore the feasibility of model ordinances relating to renewable energy siting and installation. This would include consideration of uniform codes already adopted by other jurisdictions.

5. State and Federal Agency Land Mapping Can Be Streamlined to Better Serve Applicants and Advance the Agencies' Missions. Several stakeholders urged that the state and federal agencies can add value by integrating their respective geographic mapping efforts. Within Arizona's political boundaries, there are numerous combinations of federal, tribal, state and private land holdings. The viability of a renewable energy project can be reliant on decisions by each type of owner. To the extent that land ownership, restrictions, access, and uses are identified in advance, siting and transmission options can be ascertained prior to the expenditure of significant public and private resources. From the point of view of government agencies, such mapping can encourage the best use of land, such as use of low-value property or preservation of pristine areas. The Arizona Geographic Information Council (AGIC) established in statute, brings together mapmakers, surveyors, and GIS experts from local, state, and federal agencies across Arizona who collaborate to promote sharing of data, information, and projects, leverage limited resources, and improve the quality of geographic products and processes.

Action Items: a. The Arizona Geographic Information Council will be tasked to identify and recommend ways to use the Arizona GIS Clearinghouse to meet these goals. b. The State Land Department and the Bureau of Land Management are committed to collaborate to create a renewable energy mapping system by August 2011. The system will provide public agency stakeholders access to geographic information systems data critical to the analysis and development of renewable energy sites and transmission options. The system will contain basic and processed data on legal, physical, land management and other factors influencing decision making related to the siting and development of renewable energy facilities and transmission. An interactive mapping website will be developed to assist a wide variety of stakeholders in utilizing information produced by the system to assist in the developing Arizona's renewable energy capabilities.

6. Arizona Should Systematically Monitor Innovations of Other Jurisdictions.

The state can most effectively serve the advance the development of the solar industry and other renewable energy providers by monitoring regulatory, financing, investment, research, and other innovations in other jurisdictions, in the United States and abroad. The costs of replicating innovation in the Information Age are low and can be leveraged to advance the state's competitive position.

Action Item: It is recommended that the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University undertake research into the innovations of other states, and assess their prospective applicability to Arizona. This would include analysis of how such innovations could best be implemented in Arizona, whether by administrative action or statute. As necessary and appropriate to best achieve this task, it is envisioned that the O'Connor College of Law would also convene other educational institutions (such as schools of business, sustainability, engineering etc.).

7. Apply Cost-Effective Means to Build on Arizona's "Brand" as a Global Renewable Energy Leader. Governor Brewer is publicly "committed to making Arizona the Solar Capital of the World." With our universally recognized asset of sunshine, Arizona enters the competition for solar development with an invaluable head start over other jurisdictions. This constitutes a powerful asset for economic development not only in solar energy, but in the renewable energy field generally.

Action Item: The Governor might designate a state agency to launch an international competition for a solar energy logo for Arizona. This would be open to anyone from Arizona students, to artists to advertising firms and the general public world-wide. The goal will be adoption of a trademarked logo that can be used to by the state government and others to convey the unique, inextricable link between solar energy and Arizona. The winning entrant will not be compensated monetarily, but will be acknowledged on an ongoing basis during the use of the logo.

8. Ensure Full Arizona Participation in Federal Government Support for Renewables. The federal government, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and related legislation, has committed significant resources to renewable energy research, development and deployment. This presents significant opportunities for Arizona. For example, as reported by the Arizona Solar Power Society, more than 275 residential solar installation companies have opened in the past 18 months. Arizona state agencies, the university system, and private companies are strong contenders for various contract and grant opportunities.

Action Item: The Arizona Department of Commerce Energy Office is the state government's designated agency for informing Arizona stakeholders of ARRA opportunities and assisting them in crafting proposals. Governor Brewer has recently appointed a highly experienced new head of the Energy Office to direct this effort.

9. Leverage Arizona Opportunities for Arizona-Based Companies. The market opportunities for renewable energy span the United States as well as key international markets, from China to the EU nations. It is vital to leverage the range of Arizona assets to maintain and increase our state's attractiveness to job-creating companies. In addition to our competitive tax system and statutory renewable standard, Arizona has responsive state and local governments, and a world-class university system. There are also opportunities to make Arizona-based companies aware of market opportunities in our state, and to encourage in-state customers to support Arizona companies.

Action Item: It is suggested that the Governor direct the new head of the Department of Commerce Energy Office to convene leading Arizona-based renewable energy companies to identify issues of importance to them and to encourage them maintain and expand their presence here.

10. Coordinate the Actions with Governor's Solar Energy Advisory Task Force.

The Governor has announced her intention to appoint and convene a Solar Energy Advisory Task Force to examine and, as necessary, make recommendations relating to issues including: incentives provided to solar energy producers; impediments to solar energy projects; prospective reforms to agency processes and tax structures to advance solar energy development; and other solar energy-related matters identified by the Task Force as meriting the consideration of the Governor. The Renewable Energy Future Summit and the Solar Energy Advisory Task Force have distinct yet related missions.

Action Item: It is recommended that the Governor ensure that the findings and recommendations of the Renewable Energy Future Summit are made available to the Solar Energy Advisory Task Force. Consideration might also be given to linking the two efforts through selection of Task Force members and encouraging stakeholders to avail themselves of both efforts.

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